

'econet'

Thursday 6th December 2001

Caversham Court Environment Centre

Minutes

Econet is a network meeting of volunteers who are involved in practical conservation work in the Reading area. Meetings take place quarterly and are open to all volunteers. They are an open forum for discussions on all issues.

- **Present:**

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Tina Gower | RBC (Chair) | Robert Watson | Green Gym |
| Jason Gaskill | BTCV | Judith Oliver | FOMPF (minutes) |
| Chris Williams | BTCV | Richard Coles | BeC |
| Mark Hillyer | 'Streetcare' Consultation | Kit Brownlee | RUWG |
| Philip Allen | FOMP/BeC | | |

- **Apologies**

None received

- **RBC Street Cleaning review**

Mark gave the background to the government's Best Value reviews for local authorities (a quality check on local authority services) and to RBC's current review: Street Care. Street Care covers a very wide range of subjects related to streets - litter, highway trees & verges, pavements, street furniture, public toilets, roads & roadworks. Mark was taking all views on all of the subjects of the review but we focussed on trees and verges - what we would like to see planted and how they are maintained. You are encouraged to give your views too: The main contact in RBC is Oliver.Burt@reading.gov.uk There is also a questionnaire that should be sent out to all contacts on the Econet mailing list soon; this is however not very open to giving of comments and you may prefer to write with your views and suggestions.

- **BTCV:**

Jason was welcomed to Econet. He is based at the Berkshire Office in Bridge St, Caversham. He has only been in post for 5 weeks but is already looking to the local groups to find out what would be useful for BTCV & the local office in particular to provide. The discussion focussed on more PR to inform the public of all ages of how they can join in conservation work all over the County. (New web site, flyers, better targeted & colourful magazines, contact with schools, libraries and other organisations). Short discussion on work with volunteers aged under 16 and those with care needs - a training session was thought possible.

A draft Econet publicity leaflet (Winter -Spring) was circulated (and is enclosed): Aim is for the comments to be incorporated and a final copy out by mid January. The original has colour as well as black & white; some discussion on how much it might cost for reproducing this. Jason to investigate pricing. He would especially like suggestions for the news & focus columns.

Please pass on your comments/ corrections to Jason by beginning of January.

- **Woodland & Waterways Forum 13th December**

At last WWForum the members welcomed the offer of a display from the groups to inform them of what the groups have achieved and generally do around the town. While some groups had sent some information in this is not in a form for putting up as an exhibition. Phil offered to help put some of this together on Tuesday. Tina is happy to provide display boards. No-one was available to be at the meeting from the start (6.30 pm) as the Econet representative, though Kit said she could be available later - it was commented that the early start of council meetings did not make it easy for people to attend as most people are not home till 7pm.

- **Christmas Trees: felling, selling, monies**

No groups had yet received any of the money from sales in 2000. This has led to most volunteers from Green Gym not helping out this winter. Tina apologised for the delay explaining that she had been unaware the cheques had not gone out till last week. (Update: cheques were received the following day!) This year all cash will go directly to one of the groups (FOCC) and not to RBC to avoid this delay in the future.

Distribution of monies this year was decided at last Econet as : £500 to 'power tool fund' rest to be split as last time according to vols. hours. All invoices for felling trees to be passed to Peter Scudamore, treasurer FOCC, 2 Ilchester Mews, Caversham park Village, Reading.

Most sales dates now have enough volunteers.

Trees were not looking very good quality and had been difficult to find on Wishmoor and Wildmoor; it would be useful to check any sites mid summer in 2002 and if insufficient trees are found, do not hold sales next year.

- **Tree planting (tfof) and care of existing recently planted trees**

Definite need to finish the tfof project: so while trees can continue to be donated, planted and grown in the tree nursery, no more trees are logged onto the database. Many trees continue to be available so if your group is planning some tree planting please get in touch with Tina or Tricia to see if we have the trees before ordering them up.

Some trees are in need of more weeding and general care; please organise some tree care sessions in your general workplan for 2002.

King's meadow has not got a group attached to it: the local Basketweavers are keen to take some of the willow for their work, however there is still lots of work to be done here. Possible a CROW task or two or site for Caversham & Newtown Globe get more involved with.

- **Caversham Court move to Prospect park**

The building plans have not yet been drawn up for the new site. The yard is being cleared and hardcore laid, and 3 containers will be moved in soon. One of these will be available for one of the groups (BeC, Tools for Self Reliance or BTCV). It is still envisaged that the meeting room and office will be moved first, with friends of toolstore and other general stored items soon after. The 3 brick stores are not needed as yet and so there is no immediate plans for these groups to move. BTCV are not keen to move to Prospect as this is considerable distance from their office and would like to discuss other options with RBC.

All present felt they were unclear of what was happening and when and wanted to have written reassurance (of the verbal agreement given at the August meeting) that RBC is committed to providing suitable accommodation before they are asked to move out. No-one had received copies of the minutes from the meeting and asked for these to be sent too. Tina to ask the relevant RBC officers for these items.

Tina offered to keep everyone informed of progress on the move to Prospect Park.

Tina asked for everyone's suggestions on a name for the new site; it is to be a focus/centre/base for all the wildlife conservation groups and work in Reading. It was suggested that to call it 'Prospect Park X' would imply it was only for the park and everyone wanted to make it clear that it was for everyone across the

PAGES MISSING!